1. A computerized residential automation system comprising:

a central system controller server operatively coupled to a data network; and

a residential automation computer system, operatively coupled to the data network, the residential automation computer system being associated with a residence and configured to handle one or more residential automation functions;

the residential automation computer system being configured to deny all inbound data connections from the data network; and

the residential automation computer system being further configured to initiate a connection with the central system controller for communicating residential automation information between the central system controller and the residential automation computer system.

2. The computerized residential automation system of claim 1, wherein the connection with the central system controller is a secure connection.

3. The computerized residential automation system of claim 2, wherein the connection with the central system controller is a maintained secure connection.

4. The computerized residential automation system of claim 3, wherein the maintained secure connection is periodically renegotiated.

5. The computerized residential automation system of claim 2, wherein the secure connection utilizes encryption algorithms for communications between the residential automation computer system and the central system controller.

6. The computerized residential automation system of claim 2, wherein the secure connection utilizes public/private key pair techniques for communications between the residential automation computer system and the central system controller.

7. The computerized residential automation system of claim 1, wherein the central system controller includes a plurality of central system control computers in a server farm.

8. The computerized residential automation system of claim 1, wherein the central system controller includes a plurality of central system controller computers, each central system controller computer being associated with a specific geographic region.

9. The computerized residential automation system of claim 1, wherein the central system controller is configured to accept inbound connections from a remote computer operatively coupled to the data network.

10. The computerized residential automation system of claim 9, wherein the central system controller includes an authentication algorithm for controlling access to the central system controller to an authorized user of the remote computer.

11. The computerized residential automation system of claim 10, wherein the central system controller monitors for unauthorized access from the remote computer.

12. The computerized residential automation system of claim 1, wherein the data network is a global computer network.

13. The computerized residential automation system of claim 12, wherein the global computer network is the World-Wide-Web.

14. The computerized residential automation system of claim 13, wherein the central system controller provides an access Web site on the World-Wide-Web that is configured to accept Web access from a remote computer operatively coupled to the World-Wide-Web.

15. The computerized residential automation system of claim 14, wherein the access Web site is password protected for controlling access to the central system controller to authorized users.

16. The computerized residential automation system of claim 14, wherein the access Web site is configured to allow an authorized user of the remote computer to communicate with the residential automation computer system, wherein communications between the remote computer and the residential automation computer system are transferred over the connection initiated with the central system controller by the residential automation computer system.

17. The computerized residential automation system of claim 16, wherein the communications between the remote computer and the residential automation computer system are indirect communications that are processed by the central system server.

18. The computerized residential automation system of claim 1, further comprising a firewall operatively coupled between the data network and the residential automation computer system, the firewall preventing inbound data connections to the residential automation computer system from the data network.

19. The computerized residential automation system of claim 18, wherein the firewall is a hardware component separate from the residential automation computer system.

20. A computerized residential automation system comprising:

a central system controller server operatively coupled to a data network;

a residential automation computer system associated with a residence and configured to handle one or more residential automation functions; and

a firewall operatively coupling the residential automation computer system to the data network and being configured to deny all inbound data connections from the data network to the residential computer.

21. The computerized residential automation system of claim 20, wherein the residential automation computer system is further configured to initiate a connection with the central system controller over the data network for communicating residential automation information between the central system controller and the residential automation computer system.

22. The computerized residential automation system of claim 21, wherein the connection is a secure connection utilizing encryption algorithms for communications between the residential automation computer system and the central system controller.

23. The computerized residential automation system of claim 20, wherein communication between the residential automation computer system and the central system controller occurs over a maintained secure connection on the data network.

24. The computerized residential automation system of claim 23, wherein the maintained secure connection on the data network is initiated by at least one of the residential automation computer system and the firewall.

25. The computerized residential automation system of claim 23, wherein the maintained secure connection is periodically renegotiated.

26. The computerized residential automation system of claim 23, wherein the maintained secure connection utilizes encryption algorithms for communications between the residential automation computer system and the central system controller.

27. The computerized residential automation system of claim 20, wherein the central system controller includes a plurality of central system control computers in a server farm.

28. The computerized residential automation system of claim 20, wherein the central system controller includes a plurality of central system control computers, each central system control computer being associated with a specific geographic region.

29. The computerized residential automation system of claim 20, wherein the central system controller is configured to accept inbound connections from a remote computer operatively coupled to the data network.

30. The computerized residential automation system of claim 29, wherein the central system controller includes an authentication algorithm for controlling access to the central system controller to authorized users of the remote computer.

31. The computerized residential automation system of claim 30, wherein the central system controller monitors for unauthorized access from the remote computer.

32. The computerized residential automation system of claim 20, wherein the data network is a global computer network.

33. The computerized residential automation system of claim 32, wherein the global computer network is the World-Wide-Web.

34. The computerized residential automation system of claim 33, wherein the central system controller provides an access Web site on the World-Wide-Web that is configured to accept Web access from a remote computer operatively coupled to the World-Wide-Web.

35. The computerized residential automation system of claim 34, wherein the access Web site is password protected for controlling access to the central system controller to authorized users.

36. The computerized residential automation system of claim 34, wherein the access Web site is configured to allow an authorized user of the remote computer to communicate with the residential automation computer system, wherein communications between the remote computer and the residential automation computer system are transferred over a connection initiated with the central system controller by at least one of the residential automation computer system and the firewall.

37. The computerized residential automation system of claim 36, wherein the communications between the remote computer and the residential automation computer system are indirect communications that are processed by the central system server.

38. The computerized residential automation system of claim 34, wherein the access Web site is configured to allow an authorized user of the remote computer to communicate with the residential automation computer system, wherein communications between the remote computer and the residential automation computer system are transferred over a maintained connection between the central system controller and at least one of the residential automation computer system and the firewall.

39. A computerized residential automation system comprising:

a central system controller server operatively coupled to a data network; and

a residential automation computer system, operatively coupled to the data network, the residential automation computer system being associated with a residence and configured to handle one or more residential automation functions;

the residential automation computer system being configured to deny all inbound data connections from the data network; and

the residential automation computer system being connected with the central system controller over the data network by a maintained secure connection.

40. The computerized residential automation system of claim 39, wherein the maintained secure connection is initiated by the residential automation computer system.

41. The computerized residential automation system of claim 39, wherein the maintained secure connection is periodically renegotiated.

42. The computerized residential automation system of claim 39, wherein the central system controller is configured to accept inbound connections from a remote computer operatively coupled to the data network.

43. The computerized residential automation system of claim 42, wherein the central system controller includes an authentication algorithm for controlling access to the central system controller to authorized users of the remote computer.

44. The computerized residential automation system of claim 43, wherein the central system controller monitors for unauthorized access from the remote computer.

45. The computerized residential automation system of claim 43, wherein the data network is a global computer network.

46. The computerized residential automation system of claim 45, wherein the global computer network is the World-Wide-Web.

47. The computerized residential automation system of claim 46, wherein the central system controller provides an access Web site on the World-Wide-Web that is configured to accept Web access from a remote computer operatively coupled to the World-Wide-Web.

48. The computerized residential automation system of claim 47, wherein the access Web site is password protected for controlling access to the central system controller to authorized users.

49. The computerized residential automation system of claim 47, wherein the access Web site is configured to allow an authorized user of the remote computer to communicate with the residential automation computer system, wherein communications between the remote computer and the residential automation computer system are transferred over the maintained secure connection.

50. The computerized residential automation system of claim 49, wherein the communications between the remote computer and the residential automation computer system are indirect communications that are processed by the central system server.

51. A computerized residential automation system comprising:

a central system controller server operatively coupled to a data network;

a residential automation computer system, operatively coupled to the data network, the residential automation computer system being associated with a residence and configured to handle one or more residential automation functions;

means for blocking all inbound connections or connection requests to the residential automation computer system over the data network;

means for initiating a secure connection by the residential automation computer system with the central system controller over the data network;

means for accessing the central system controller by an authorized user on a remote computer; and

means for facilitating communications between the authorized user on the remote computer and the residential automation computer system via the central system controller and the secure connection.

52. A method for operating a residential automation system that includes a central system controller server operatively coupled to a data network and a residential automation computer system, operatively coupled to the data network, where the residential automation computer system being associated with a residence and configured to handle one or more residential automation functions, the method including the steps of:

blocking all inbound connections to the residential automation computer system over the data network;

initiating by the residential automation computer system a secure connection with the central system controller;

communicating residential automation system information between the central system controller and the residential automation computer system over the secure connection.

53. The method of claim 52, wherein the step of initiating a secure connection with the central system controller includes the step of initiating by the residential automation computer system a maintained secure connection.

54. The method of claim 53, further comprising the step of periodically renegotiating the maintained secure connection.

55. The method of claim 52, wherein the communicating step includes the step of utilizing encryption algorithms.

56. The method of claim 52, wherein the communicating step includes the step of utilizing public/private key pair techniques.

57. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of accessing the central system controller by a remote computer over the data network, wherein the communicating step includes the step of communicating residential automation system information between the remote computer and the residential automation computer system via the central system controller.

58. The method of claim 57, wherein the accessing step includes the step of authenticating a user of the remote computer as having authorized access to the residential automation system information.

59. The method of claim 58, further comprising the step of monitoring for unauthorized access to the central system controller.

60. The method of claim 57, wherein:

the data network is the World-Wide-Web;

the accessing step includes the steps of providing an accessing Web site by the central system controller and logging onto the accessing Web site by the remote computer; and

the communication step includes the step of communicating residential automation system information between the remote computer and the residential automation computer system via the accessing Web site.

61. A method for operating a residential automation system that includes a central system controller server operatively coupled to a data network and a residential automation computer system, operatively coupled to the data network, where the residential automation computer system being associated with a residence and configured to handle one or more residential automation functions, the method including the steps of:

blocking all inbound connections to the residential automation computer system over the data network;

maintaining a secure connection between the residential automation system and the central system controller on the data network;

communicating residential automation system information between the central system controller and the residential automation computer system over the maintained secure connection.

62. The method of claim 61, further comprising the step of periodically renegotiating the maintained secure connection.

63. The method of claim 61, wherein the communicating step includes the step of utilizing encryption algorithms.

64. The method of claim 63, wherein the communicating step includes the step of utilizing public/private key pair techniques.

65. The method of claim 61, further comprising the step of accessing the central system controller by a remote computer over the data network, wherein the communicating step includes the step of communicating residential automation system information between the remote computer and the residential automation computer system via the central system controller.

66. The method of claim 65, wherein the accessing step includes the step of authenticating a user of the remote computer as having authorized access to the residential automation system information.

67. The method of claim 66, further comprising the step of monitoring for unauthorized access to the central system controller.

68. The method of claim 65, wherein:

the data network is the World-Wide-Web;

the accessing step includes the steps of providing an accessing Web site by the central system controller and logging onto the accessing Web site by the remote computer; and

the communication step includes the step of communicating residential automation system information between the remote computer and the residential automation computer system via the accessing Web site.

69. A method for communicating with a residential automation computer system with a remote computer over a data network, comprising the steps of:

accessing a central system controller by the remote computer over the data network;

communicating residential automation system information between the remote computer and the central system controller;

initiating by the residential automation computer system a secure connection on the data network between the residential automation computer system and the central system controller; and

communicating residential automation system information between the central system controller and the residential automation computer system over the secure connection between the central system controller and the residential automation computer system.

70. The method of claim 69, further comprising the step of blocking all inbound connections to the residential automation computer system over the data network.

71. A method for communicating with a residential automation computer system with a remote computer over a data network, comprising the steps of:

accessing a central system controller by the remote computer over the data network;

communicating residential automation system information between the remote computer and the central system controller;

maintaining a secure connection on the data network between the residential automation controller and the central system controller; and

communicating residential automation system information between the central system controller and the residential automation computer system over the secure connection between the central system controller and the residential automation computer system.

72. The method of claim 71, further comprising the step of blocking all inbound connections to the residential automation computer system over the data network.

73. The method of claim 72, further comprising the step of periodically renegotiating the maintained secure connection.